

Serial No.: 10/065,336  
Attorney Docket No.: P-575

Patent

**Amendment To The Claims**

Please amend the claims as shown:

1. (currently amended) A method for a user for authorizing and providing evidence of payment of postage for a mail piece comprising:  
obtaining a registered digital pen meter registered to the user, wherein the digital pen meter has been registered with a postal authority;  
handwriting a return address field on a mail piece;  
handwriting a destination address field on a mail piece;  
handwriting a mail piece identifier on the mail piece;  
handwriting a postage value field on the mail piece;  
then facilitating the transfer of digital pen data to a server by selecting a class of service by selecting a class of service box on the mail piece; and  
then placing the mail piece in the mail stream, wherein  
an account of the user is debited after the postal value field is handwritten on the mail piece.

2. – 5. (canceled).

6. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
obtaining biometric data relating to the pen strokes of the user.

7. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
obtaining a postage value indicator written in a postal value field.

8. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein:  
the mail piece identifier comprises data obtained from a destination address field.

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9. (original) The method of claim 8 wherein:  
the mail piece identifier comprises a graphical image representation of the destination address field.

10. (original) The method of claim 8 wherein:  
the mail piece identifier comprises data obtained from at least one pen stroke captured from writing on the mail piece.

11. (original) The method of claim 8 wherein:  
the mail piece identifier comprises pen stroke data captured from the destination address field and is stored to be matched with a scan of the destination address field.

12. (currently amended) A method for verifying payment of postage for a mail piece processed in a mail stream comprising:  
obtaining digital pen data from a user for authorizing payment of postage wherein the digital pen data includes a mail piece identifier;  
creating a modified mail piece identifier using the mail piece identifier and modification data associated with the postage payment authorization;  
creating a reference user profile using the modified mail piece identifier;  
storing the reference user profile and associated the reference user profile with a user identifier, the modified mail piece identifier and the mail piece identifier;  
obtaining a processed mail piece identifier from the mail piece;  
obtaining customer data from the mail piece and determining a mail piece user identifier using the customer data;  
determining a mail piece user profile for the mail piece using the processed mail identifier and the mail piece user identifier; and  
comparing the mail piece user profile to the user profile; and  
verifying payment of postage using the comparison result.

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13. –15. (canceled).

16. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein:  
the digital pen data comprises an electronic signature card.

17. (previously presented) The method of claim 16 wherein:  
the electronic signature card includes a secure hash that includes data from  
the return address field.

18. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
selecting a class of service using the digital pen meter.

19. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
providing account selection data by handwriting the return address field.

20. (previously presented) The method of claim 12 wherein:  
the modification data includes time stamp information associated with the  
postage authorization request.

21. (previously presented) The method of claim 12 wherein:  
the modification data is selected from the group consisting of user biometric  
data, user identifier, digital pen meter identifier and a time stamp associated with the  
postage payment authorization.

22. (previously presented) The method of claim 12 wherein:  
the modification data includes the user identifier.

23. (currently amended) The method of claim 12 further comprising:

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storing a mail piece processed record for the mail piece including the mail piece identifier and the user identifier;

processing at least one additional mail piece to determine a second mail piece processed record including a second mail piece identifier and a second user identifier; and

comparing the mail piece processed record and the second mail piece processed record.

24. (currently amended) A method for verifying payment of postage comprising:

obtaining a mail piece identification image from a user as the user writes a destination address with a digital pen, wherein the digital pen is associated with a digital pen identifier that is associated with a user identifier;

storing the mail piece identification image in a record associated with the use, wherein the record is stored in a database having a plurality of records;

obtaining a processed mail piece identification image from a processed mail piece;

searching the database using the processed mail piece identification image using an image best fit search; and

verifying payment of postage using the database search result.

25. (currently amended) The method of claim 24 wherein:

the mail piece identification image is associated with the user using a the user identifier.

26. (currently amended) The method of claim 24 wherein:

the mail piece identification image is associated with the user using a the digital pen identifier.

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27. (previously presented) The method of claim 24 further comprising:  
associating the mail piece identification image with a time stamp;  
associating the processed mail piece identification image with a processed  
image time stamp; and  
comparing the time stamp with the processed image time stamp.